



GRASPING GOD'S WORD

The Interpretive Journey

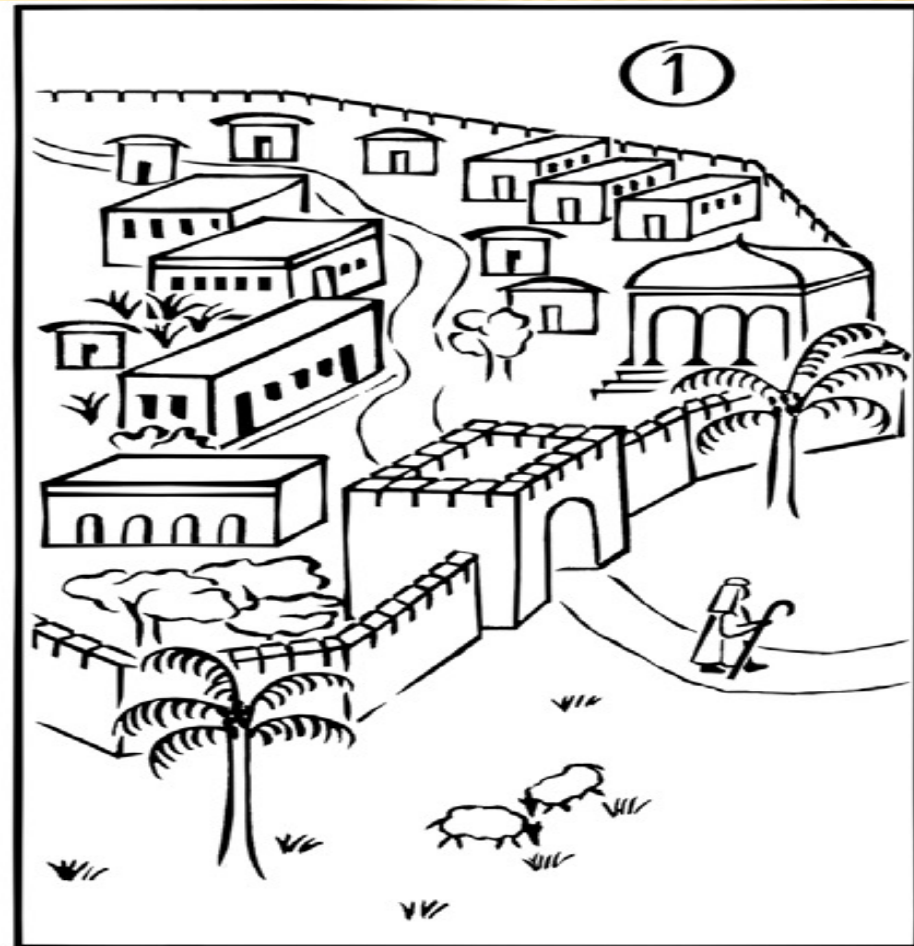
Unit 1

WHY HERMENEUTICS?

- *Hermeneutics* - the study of the methodological principles of interpretation
- *Biblical hermeneutics* is the study about how to study, understand, and interpret the Bible.
- Biblical hermeneutics is a very important topic for every Christian.
- The way a person understands Scripture will ultimately affect every aspect of his or her Christian life. Worldview!
- Biblical hermeneutics describes the principles for properly interpreting the Bible.
- Proper biblical hermeneutics removes “**self**” from the process

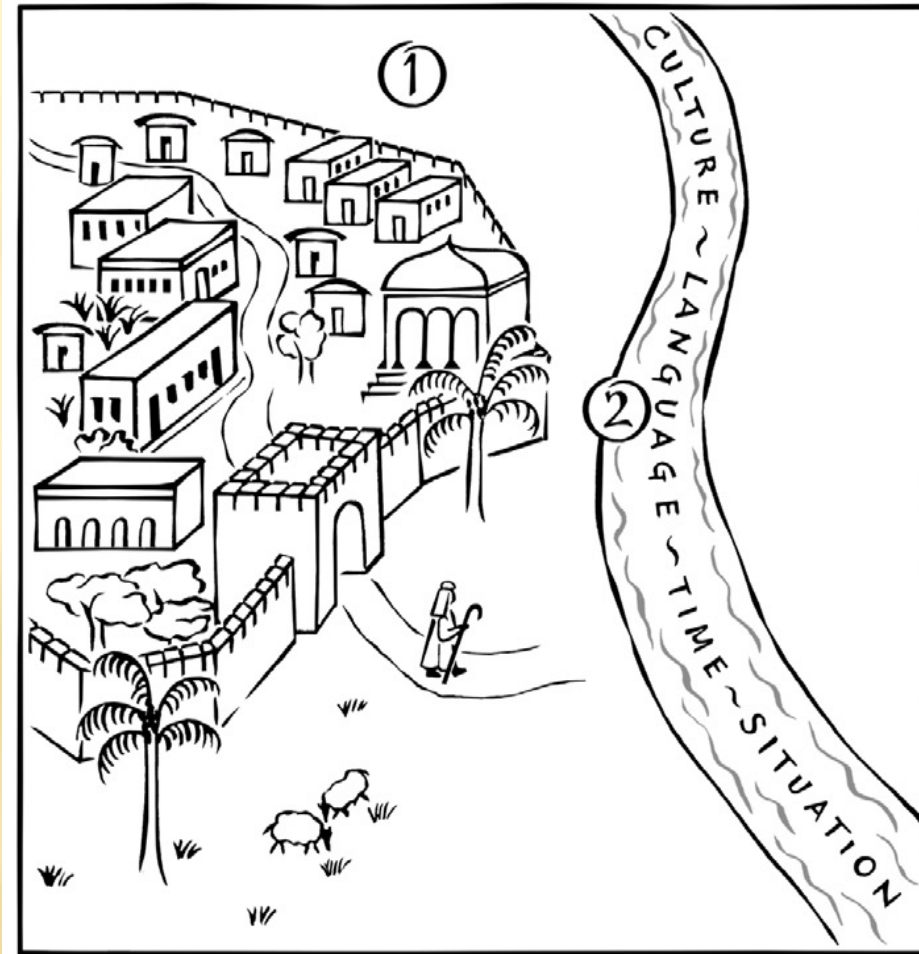
STEP 1: GRASPING THE TEXT IN THEIR TOWN

- What did the text mean to the biblical audience?
- Read the text carefully
- Observe all you can
 - grammar
 - significant words
- Historical context
- Literary context
- In the past...



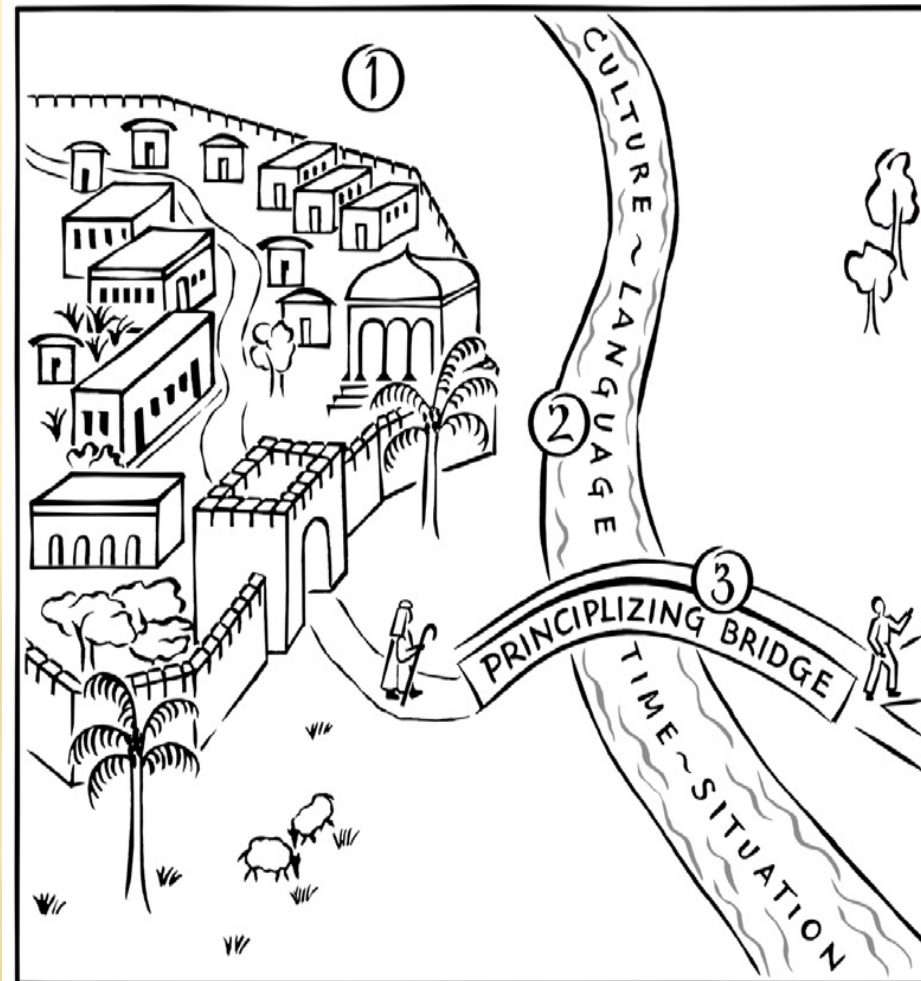
STEP 2: MEASURE THE WIDTH OF THE RIVER

- What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?
 - culture
 - language – Hebrew/Greek
 - situation
 - time
 - often covenant
- Identify unique aspects of the situation of the passage.



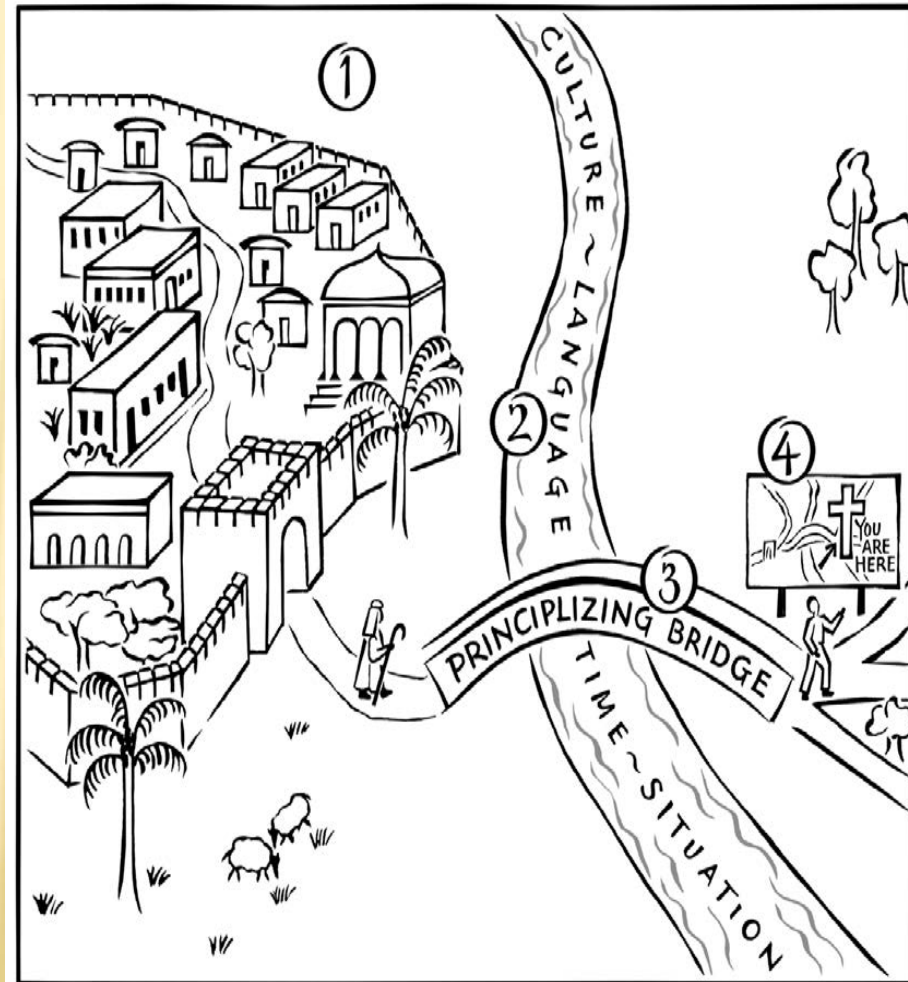
STEP 3: CROSSING THE PRINCIPLIZING BRIDGE

- What is the theological principle of the text?
 - reflected in the text
 - timeless
 - not culturally bound
 - corresponds to the rest of Scripture
 - relevant to both biblical & contemporary audience



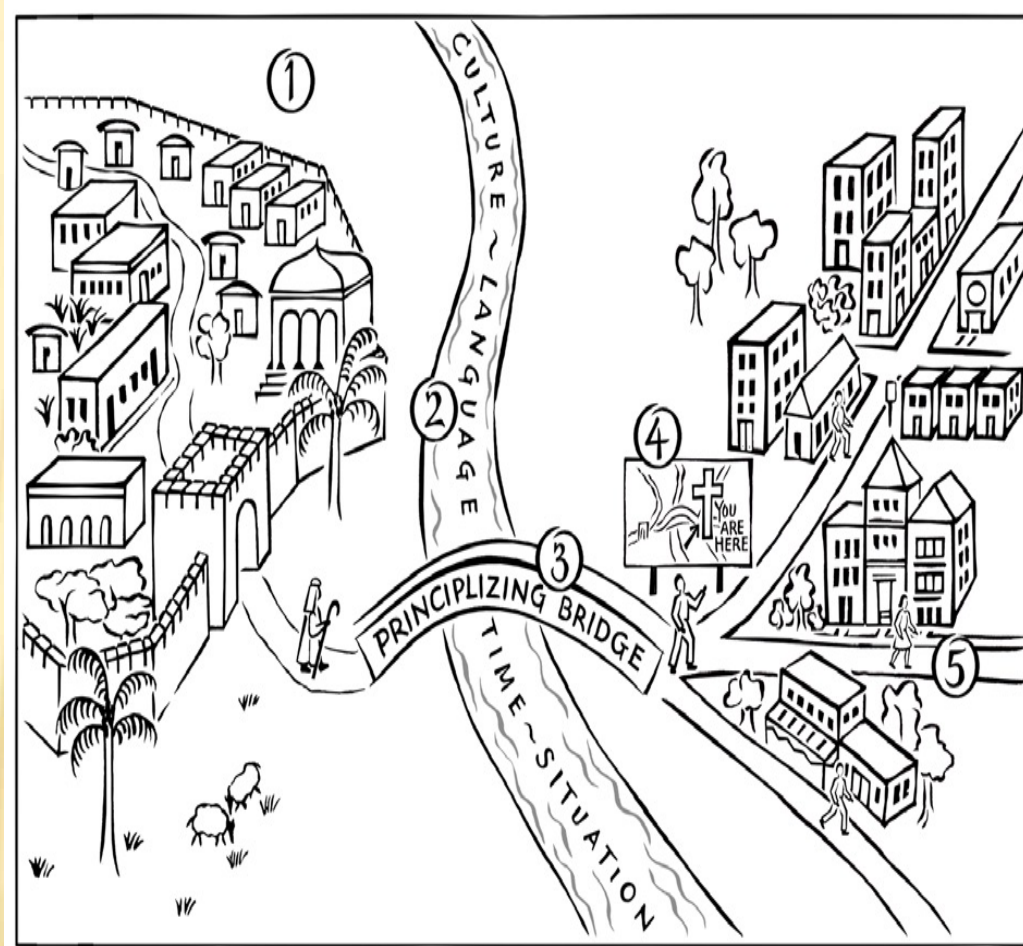
STEP 4: CONSULT THE BIBLICAL MAP

- How does the theological principle fit with the rest of the Bible?
- Parts-whole spiral – we reflect back & forth between the text & the teachings of the rest of Scripture
- Does it correlate with the rest of the Bible?
- OT through the NT grid

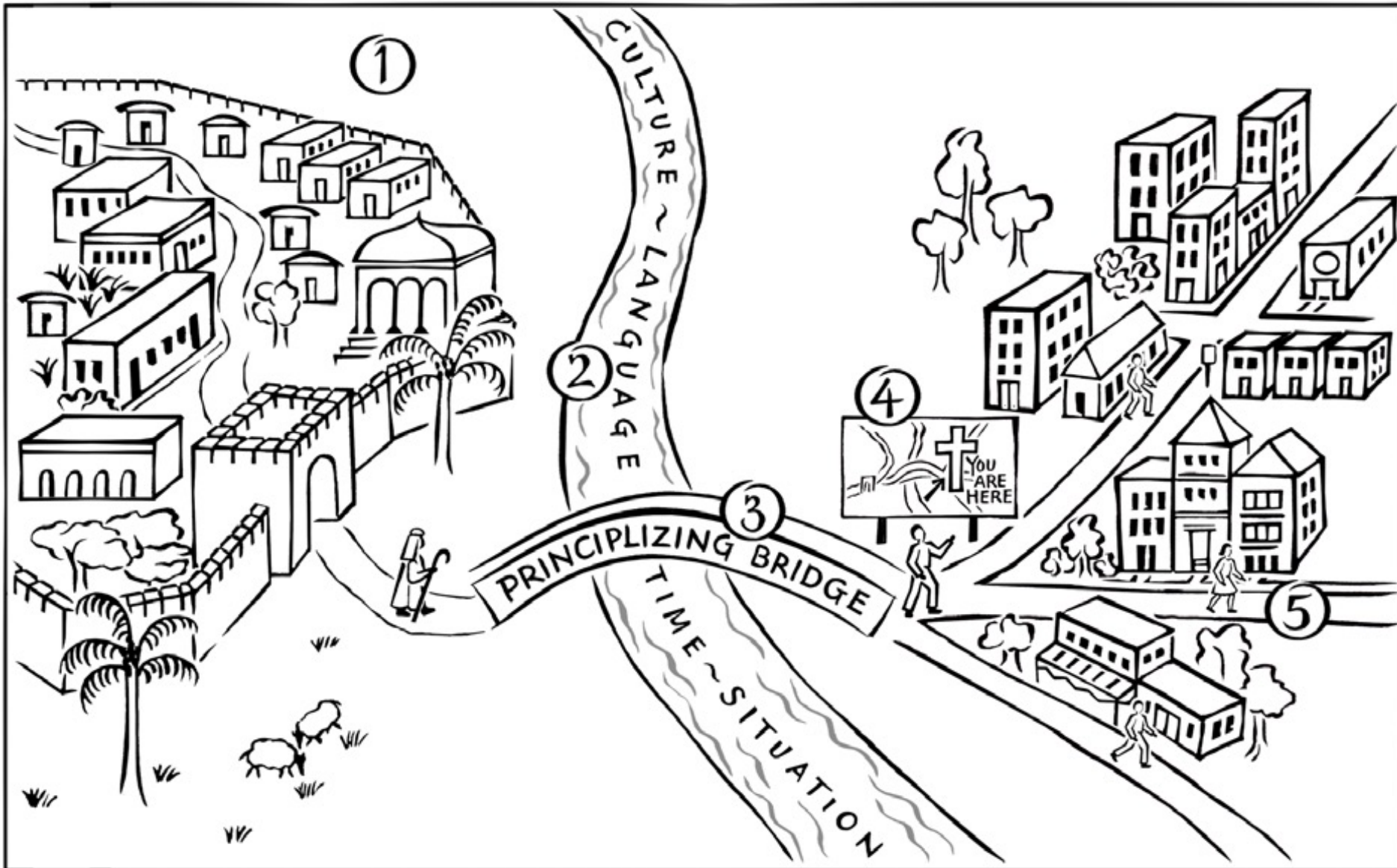


STEP 5: GRASPING THE TEXT IN OUR TOWN

- How should individual Christians today apply the theological principles in their lives?
- NO abstract meaning!
- Might only be one or two theological principles
- Numerous applications!



THE INTERPRETIVE JOURNEY



EXAMPLE JOSHUA 1:1-9

1-6

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them — to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert and to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates — all the Hittite country — to the Mediterranean Sea on the west. No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

EXAMPLE JOSHUA 1:1-9

7-9

“Be **strong** and very **courageous**. Be careful to **obey** all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be **strong** and **courageous**. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

EXAMPLE JOSHUA 1:1-9

Step 1: What did the text mean to the biblical audience?

The Lord commanded Joshua, the new leader of Israel, to draw strength and courage from God's empowering presence, to be obedient to the law of Moses, and to meditate on the law so that he would be successful in the conquest of the Promised Land.

Step 2: What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?

We are not leaders of the nation Israel (although some of us may be leaders in the church). We are not embarking on the conquest of Canaan, the Promised Land. We are not under the old covenant of law.

EXAMPLE JOSHUA 1:1-9

Step 3: What is the theological principle in this text?

To be effective in serving God and successful in the task to which he has called us, we must draw strength and courage from his presence. We must also be obedient to God's Word, meditating on it constantly.

Step 4: How does our theological principle fit with the rest of the Bible?

The rest of the Bible consistently affirms that God's people can draw strength and courage from his presence. In the New Testament believers experience God's presence through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit rather than through his presence in the tabernacle. Likewise, throughout both the Old Testament and the New Testament God's people are exhorted to pay close, obedient attention to his Word.

EXAMPLE JOSHUA 1:1-9

Step 5: How should individual Christians today live out the theological principles?

There are numerous possible applications. ***Here are a few suggested ones:***

- Spend more time meditating on God's Word by listening to Christian music as you ride in your car.
- If God calls you to a new, scary ministry, such as teaching fourth-grade Sunday school, then be strengthened and encouraged by his empowering presence. Be obedient, keeping a focus on the Scriptures.
- If you are in a church leadership position, realize that successful Christian leadership requires strength and courage that flows from the presence of God.

THE REASON FOR THE JOURNEY

- The Word of God speaks.
- We want to hear, interpret and apply the Word correctly.
- It removes the “I feel” or “I think to means” from our speech.
- We mature as Christians.
- Experience those “Ah-Ha” moments

ARE YOU READY FOR THE JOURNEY?

